

## Message Text

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ACTION IO-03

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ADP-00 ARA-08 NSC-10 NSCE-00 CIAE-00

INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 L-02 PRS-01 RSR-01 /051 W

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FM USMISSION USUN NY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8185

INFO AMEMBASSY PANAMA

S E C R E T USUN 2012

LIMDIS

R. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PN

SUBJ: PANAMANIAN DEPUTY PERMREP RECOMMENDS HIGH LEVEL

USG REP VISIT PANAMA

1. MISOFF MET WITH PANAMANIAN DEPUTY PERMREP RIOS MAY 25 AT LATTER' S REQUEST IN ORDER TO DISCUSS WHAT RIOS TERMED HIS " PERSONAL FEAR" THAT UNLESS BOTH US AND PANAMA MAKE VISIBLE PROGRESS RAPIDLY ON SOME ASPECT OF CANAL ISSUE, PRESSURES WITHIN GOP TO BRING ISSUE TO UNGA THIS FALL WILL BECOME IRRESISTIBLE. ACCORDING TO RIOS, GENERA TORRIJOS HAS TAKEN NO DECISION SO FAR AND INSTEAD APPROVED TRANSMISSION OF NEW PANAMANIAN PROPOSALS ON CANAL TO US EARLIER THIS MONTH IN ORDER TEST THE WATERS. SEVERAL OF TORRIJOS' ADVISORS ( RIOS DID NOT NAME THEM BUT IMPLIED THEY WERE IN FOREIGN MINISTRY) ARE URGING THAT GOP PLACE CANAL ISSUE ON GA AGENDA THIS YEAR. RIOS REGRETTE THIS POSSIBILITY WHICH HE SAID WOULD CERTAINLY INCREASE ANTAGONISMS BETWEEN US AND PANAMA AND MAKE SETTLEMENT OF CANAL ISSUE THAT MUCH MORE DIFFICULT.

2. RIOS THEN OFFERED AS HIS " STRICTLY PERSONAL SUGGESTION AS A FRIEND OF THE US" THE DISPATCH OF A PRESTIGIOUS HIGH-LEVEL US ENVOY TO PANAMA IN THE VERY NEAR FUTURE, NOT TO NEGOTIATE THE CANAL ISSUE BUT TO DISCUSS WITH GEN. TORRIJOS

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AND OTHERS THE CANAL AS WELL AS OVERALL BILATERAL RELATIONS. RIOS CLAIMED THAT HIGHLY VISIBLE VISIT BY " PERSONAL REP OF PRESIDENT, FOR EXAMPLE" WOULD DEMONSTRATE INTEREST AT TOP OF USG IN " LISTENING TO PANAMA' S VIEWS" AND WOULD

WEAKEN THOSE IN PANAMA WHO ARGUE AGAINST FURTHER BILATERAL NEGOTIATIONS AT THIS TIME ON GROUNDS US NOT INTERESTED IN SETTLEMENT. AGAIN EMPHASIZING HE SPEAKING IN PERSONAL CAPACITY, RIOS STRONGLY RECOMMENDED THAT IF USG CONSIDERS IDEA OF DISPATCHING PRESTIGIOUS ENVOY TO PANAMA HAS MERIT, US OFFICIAL COULD THEN EXPLORE POSSIBILITY WITH PRESIDENT LAKAS. RIOS SAID LAKAS IS FAVORABLY DISPOSED TOWARDS US AND IS VERY WORRIED ABOUT POLITICAL DRIFT IN PANAMA. RIOS EXPLICITLY ADVISED AGAINST RAISING MATTER FIRST WITH FM TACK BUT DECLINED TO EXPLAIN WHY DOING SO WOULD BE UNWISE.

3. MISOFF LIMITED HIS COMMENTS TO NOTING THAT SIGNS OF IMPROVED RELATIONS BETWEEN US AND PANAMA, AS SYMBOLIZED BY RECENT " COOLING" OF RHETORIC EMANATING FROM PANAMA, WERE WELCOME. MISOFF PROMISED TO REPORT RIOS SUGGESTION BUT MADE NO COMMITMENT TO INFORM RIOS WHAT, IF ANY, ACTION US WOULD TAKE ON IT. ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS DURING CONVERSATION, RIOS URGED THAT MISOFF NOT ATTRIBUTE SUGGESTIONS TO HIM WHEN INFORMING DEPT.

4. COMMENT: RIOS IS " OLD- TIMER" AT UN PRE- DATING ADVENT OF TORRIJOS REGIME. HE IS NORMALLY LOW- KEY TO POINT OF VIRTUAL SELF- EFFACEMENT AND THIS IS FIRST TIME THAT RIOS HAS TAKEN LEAD IN RAISING ISSUE OF US- PANAMA RELATIONS WITH US. RIOS GENERALLY TAKES VERY CONSERVATIVE LINE ON MANY UN ISSUES AND IS PARTICULARLY CLOSE TO ISRAELIS AND THEIR FRIENDS IN NEW YORK. IT SEEMS VERY UNLIKELY THAT HE HAS DISCUSSED THIS " INITIATIVE" WITH AMB. BOYD. END COMMENT.

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**TAGS:** PFOR PN  
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